

**BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
City Hall, 11th Floor
Park Conference Room
455 N. Main
August 11, 2014
3pm**

Present: Bryan Frye, Ron Allen, Chris Highfill, Steve Hieger, Hoyt Hillman, Cindy Claycomb, Tom Roth

Absent: None

Also Present: Marty Miller, Interim Director of Park and Recreation, Elizabeth Harlenske, City Assistant Attorney, Christina Butler, Clerk, Troy Hendricks, Stacey Hamm, Karen Holmes, Brittany Glas, Merry Murray, Cindy Renard, Bill Morton, Robert Campbell, Ron Wolf, Jimmy Owens, John Emmons, Sydney Rhodes, Elaine Jones, Leon Salsman, Jim Yockey, Betty, Tynck, John Stevens, Elena Ingle, Lonny Wright, Rick Roberts, Lois Barth, Polly Clement, Joe Clement, Michael Renard, Lukas Renard, Citizens.

The meeting was called to order at approximately 3:00pm.

PUBLIC AGENDA

None.

REGULAR AGENDA

Item 1: Approval of Minutes

Motion by Frye, second by Hillman, IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED to approve, sign, and file the minutes of the July 14, 2014 Board of Park Commissioners Regular Meeting (6-0, Roth not present).

Item 2A: Alcohol Exemption for Gazebo Park at Drury Hotel

Frye stated that the gazebo park at the Drury Hotel currently only permits cereal malt beverages. The entire area is being used as a venue for weddings and special events. The idea is to create a zone from the gazebo to the south to Douglas and east to the Drury Hotel that could be exempt. A fundraiser is being planned in October by Envision, a non-profit agency, and they are requesting alcohol be allowed to be served.

Harlenske stated that there are several requests being proposed for exemptions, but they would probably not be done by October. There is a project in law reviewing all of the proposed changes. She stated that if the Board wants to get this done by the October event, she recommends doing it separately and amending it later. She needs to know what the intent is since it is an outside area. Other exemptions have been limited to a community event or a special permit event.

Frye stated he thought the recommendation would be the same as the other outside areas with a community event or special permit.

Claycomb asked if the timeline would meet the fundraiser date.

Frye replied that it may not, but he still thinks it is something to consider for the future.

Harlenske asked if the Board wants to try to accommodate the request if possible.

Frye responded yes.

Harlenske stated she should be able to get it done by the third week of October.

Frye asked if there was public comment. There was none.

Motion by Frye, second by Claycomb, IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED to instruct staff to put together the ordinance as it is for outside spaces for review and possible adoption at the September meeting (7-0).

Harlenske stated she would put in a placeholder for City Council.

Item 3A: Golf Advisory Committee Recommendation for Clapp Golf Course

Frye stated this was a carryover from July's Park Board Meeting regarding Clapp Golf Course. There was a question as to whether there could be an acquisition of the golf course because of the stipulations of the deed.

Hendricks stated that Property Management pulled the title and the deed. They discovered there are no covenants and it is up to the Park Board as to what they want to do with the land.

Frye stated that the Golf Advisory Committee (GAC) recommends Concept A to reconfigure the course to a par 70 and allow an RFP for two acres for funds to facilitate improvements at Clapp. The GAC asked that this recommendation be taken to the Park Board. Frye asked if the Board had any questions and there were none.

Hillman introduced Cindy Renard.

Cindy Renard (1110 Royal Road) stated she represents the Friends of LW Clapp. She stated that they had surveyed several people and they all said no to the sale of a portion of the golf course. She feels if it is sold, it could lead to the demise of the course. She reviewed the financials of the course and the decline is the same as the other original courses. She quoted Ferris as using Clapp as a giving tree. She feels that the golf fund is financially stable. According to the GAC plans, they need a fast course and a place people want to go. Clapp is fast: a person can play 18 holes in 3 hours and 18 minutes. There are putting greens and a practice area for pitching and chipping. The Golf Pro is actively promoting youth golf. The recent renovations made it more attractive. It is a regulation par 70 course and the only southeast Wichita course. There are new golfers coming from McConnell Air Force Base and WSU who have been displaced. Clapp is a course for new golfers. The park has been in limbo for three years since it has been offered up. She stated there is no debt with Clapp and it is profitable. It is a cornerstone in the community. East of the park has undesired activity and a convenience store could draw these activities. The acquisition of this property was under the power of eminent domain which was in legal proceedings for 1 ½ years. It is a memorial for LW Clapp whose legacy was to create a park system.

Dr. John Emmons (3714 E Clark) stated he is a Meadowlark Neighborhood Association Board Member and opposes any changes for Clapp. He loves the beauty of the park.

Ron Wolf (8401 S Hydraulic, Haysville, KS) has been a member of the Clapp Men's Club for over 20 years. They have lost players and organizations due to the course being in limbo. If a golfer wants to play a shorter game, there are placards to play a shorter game. New airmen and officers are coming to the area and Clapp is located close to them. He cannot see throwing away property for a measly \$1-2 million.

Jim Yockey (1314 Ridgehorse Circle) is concerned with the environment because there are too many gas stations already. He is also concerned it will create more crime.

Leon Salsman (2419 Hiram) has been a member of the Boeing/Spirit League since the 1960s. It is five stop lights from Spirit and if they cannot play there, they will have to go to Pine Bay, Derby or Hidden Lakes.

John Stevens (3125 E Boston) lived across the street from Clapp as a child. He thinks the proposal is full of problems and it is not intelligent to sell park land. The sale to a 24/7 business will lead to social problems and will lead unwanted nighttime customers to the neighborhood. The neighborhood will not be safe and to encourage them to the neighborhood is not good. They can become a gang magnet. He hopes the Board will vote no on this.

Frye clarified that there is no current RFP nor are there offers on the table. He stated there is nothing in the works and it is unfair to disparage a company unfairly.

Elena Ingle (3608 Meadow Lane) stated that she and family members live a block and a half from the park. She is concerned that the impermeability caused by taking up grass space will cause more flooding. Leave it as green space.

Bill Norton (1101 Royal Road) stated he thought there was a 2012 informal offer from QuikTrip and there is no harmony between a golf course and a convenience store. Will female players feel safe? Will concessions increase if they are buying from the cheaper stores? Has a marketing study been done? He stated that the Park Board holds the deed, but they represent the citizens. He asked them to consider the humanitarian and aesthetic issues because there is too much at stake.

Robert Campbell (4251 E Mt Vernon) asked why the Board is trying to bid it out if there are no offers. They do not need more convenience stores and the Board does not need to sell it off. He asked the Board to put in something that will be beneficial and that will not cost the community. The property values will go down. He is concerned if a business is put on the corner, trash will increase. There also will be nowhere for the water to go because the course floods. Nobody wants the sale.

George Theoharris (address not provided) is the Vice-President of Grandview Heights and is concerned he will lose the red fox that runs loose on the property.

Frye asked if there was any further public comment and there was none. He stated the idea for the proposal was born out of the Golf Advisory Committee (GAC) and it was discussed in a series of public meetings. During his time on the Board, the focus for golf was to maximize it, create sustainability, and give the citizens something of which they could be proud. The golf enterprise is struggling and they need to look at opportunities to grow rounds. The two acres are possibly under-utilized. The GAC put together

some minor course changes with profits going to improvements to the course and to the golf fund. The GAC saw this as a much needed cash infusion for the golf fund. He asked if there were further comments from the Board and there were none.

Motion by Frye to take the Golf Advisory Committee's recommendation for concept A to staff to develop an RFP and marketing strategy.

Frye stated there are no current RFPs or proposals so the Board can determine the parameters and restrictions.

Hillman proposed an alternate motion to accept, file and ignore the Golf Advisory Committee's recommendation.

Frye asked Hillman if his motion was to this specific issue.

Hillman responded yes.

Allen seconded Hillman's motion.

Hillman stated there are alternate thoughts about acquiring funds to be used for overhead and golf expenses and debt and those need to be considered.

Frye stated they will have to go back to the GAC to explore other opportunities.

Hillman's motion passes unanimously (7-0).

Item 4A: Recreation Update (Karen Holmes/Jim Mason)

Jim Mason stated he is at the Great Plains Nature Center and the focus of his presentation would be the Wichita Wild Habitat Areas. These designated areas make up approximately ¼ of the park system. These non-traditional park areas were developed in 1986 and initiated by Bob Gress. They have prescribed burns to manage the 15 parks. Of the 15 parks, Pawnee Prairie Park is the largest. It is located on the west side of Wichita. Chisholm Creek Park is the largest park on the east side of Wichita and it has over 2 miles of nature trails. He showed maps and aerial views of the parks and described the features of several of the parks.

Frye asked if the Wichita Wild Habitat Areas are highlighted on the website.

Mason responded yes.

Hamm stated that the top three parks are on the website.

Holmes thanked Mason for his presentation and noted that Mason is a renowned naturalist.

Item 4B: Golf Annual Report Update (Troy Hendricks)

Hendricks distributed the rounds report for July. He noted that rounds were up 3% and revenue was up 2% year-to-date. The weather has helped. Specials were down significantly from last year because they are not using coupons at Tex Consolver and Sim.

Hieger asked what months are used for the golf calendar year.

Hendricks responded January through December.

Frye noted that income is up because they are not giving away so much on specials.

Hendricks stated that private cart usage at Auburn Hills Golf Course was discussed at last month's meeting and there were no updates yet.

Frye added that information from Harlenske in Legal would go to the GAC first before being presented to the Park Board.

Hendricks stated that the new point of sale software will go live the second week of October. They will be converting and migrating soon and IT will notify him as the test site becomes live.

Frye asked if it will affect the golfwichita website.

Hamm responded no.

Frye stated that based on the decision today, the GAC needs to look at alternative funding sources and plans to drive additional revenue. They will have their work cut out for them, but it needs to start there.

Frye asked for the date of the next golf meeting.

Hendricks responded it could be September 10, but he would have to get back to him.

Frye asked Hendricks to make sure the Park Board knows the date in case they want to attend to hear the GAC's response to today's decision.

Item 4C: Updates from Director and President

Hillman asked what happened with the sling shot ordinance.

Harlenske responded that the ordinance has not gone to City Council yet. The City Manager wanted the ordinance to be presented together with others. There are still some stragglers, so they will get this ordinance change on by itself. She stated the Board voted to change the ordinance to remove firearms because the state has already changed it. The only thing remaining is sling shots.

Miller gave an update on Botanica. He stated they are in their 3½ year of the Children's Garden. They had anticipated a spike in attendance and new memberships; that has happened and is still growing. They had almost 9,000 people through the gate in July. They lost their accountant recently so there are no financial updates. The new event building already has 57 rental contracts for 2015. The Chinese Garden is 40% completed. The entryway will be a donor wall for naming opportunities. On Saturday, August 15, from 5-8pm, Botanica will host a night market event with entertainment, vendors and food from the Asian community. This garden should be a destination place for the City.

Frye noted that he took part in the eight interviews at end of July for the Executive Director search. He noted that some of the Board may be asked to meet with the finalists.

Frye stated that the challenge remains for the GAC. They will continue to deal with high debt, rounds, and weather. They need to find additional funding ideas and opportunities. He noted that staff has implemented some suggestions already, but they need to stay ahead of the game and continue to be proactive.

Roth asked about the annual retreat.

Frye noted it is usually done in September as a Saturday morning retreat.

Roth asked if they should have it without an Executive Director even though they have a full board.

Frye suggested having elections on the September agenda and saving the annual meeting until the new Director is in place.

Item 5: Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:30pm.

Bryan Frye, President

Christina Butler, Clerk